

SRIA PUBLIC FORUM

Hosted by West Florida Regional Planning Council (WFRPC)

Thursday - April 23, 2015

5:30 p.m. CDT

Pensacola Beach Community Church

920 Panferio Drive

Pensacola Beach, FL 32561

- AGENDA -

I. Welcome & Introductions

Vikki Garrett, West Florida Regional Planning Council (WFRPC)

II. Attachments

SRIA structure, departments, duties, and historical information

III. Public Forum

Public input: How should land leases and property taxes be handled in the future for Santa Rosa Island?

Please fill out a speaker request form if you wish to speak.

If you do not wish to speak in public but would like to provide comments, please fill out a written comment form or email comments to: vikki.garrett@wfrpc.org.

IV. Announcement

Overview of the SRIA Organizational Structure Comprehensive Analysis will be presented to the SRIA during a board member forum scheduled for Friday - April 24, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. This is a public meeting and open to the public but there will be no public comment period at the meeting.

V. Closing Remarks

- SRIA STRUCTURE, DEPARTMENTS AND DUTIES -

Pensacola Beach, is owned by Escambia County, Florida, and is under the direction of the Santa Rosa Island Authority (SRIA). The SRIA was created by the Florida legislature in 1947 under Chapter 24500. The SRIA does not receive tax support from the taxpayers of the county. It is fully funded from rental fees collected from businesses and residences on the beach.

The Authority is made up of six members, five are named by members of the Escambia County Board of County Commissioner and whose term is the same as the commissioner who appointed them. The sixth member is elected by the registered voters on Pensacola Beach. The sixth members' term is two years.

Because of restrictions placed in the legal document from the United States government, land may not be purchased on Pensacola Beach; instead property is rented by the Island Authority for varying periods of time.

Pensacola Beach is about 1,474 acres, which make up approximately 30% of Escambia County on Santa Rosa Island. Pensacola Beach is about eight miles long and a quarter mile at its widest. At the present time 60% of Pensacola Beach is public use or public service land with the remaining 40% rented for residential and commercial use.

Administration and Leasing

This department insures that the Authority conducts business according to the rules regulations, ordinances and statues that have been adopted governing the Authority's roles, activities and responsibilities. It also plans and implements quality events and promotions on Pensacola Beach to enhance and increase business on the island. The department oversees:

- Public Records
- Sunshine Law
- Leases
- Emergency Preparedness
- Meeting Schedule
- Legal Issues
- Request for proposals, Request for qualifications and bids

Environmental and Developmental Services

The mission of this department is to ensure that all construction, development and redevelopment on Pensacola Beach are consistent with applicable local, state and federal regulations. The department oversees:

- Development Plan Review
- Customer Service
- Administration of the National Flood Insurance Program
- Environmental Programs
- Administrative Management of Engineering activities
- Emergency Preparedness
- 1988 Pensacola Beach Land Use Plan
- Disaster Recovery and Mitigation

- SRIA DEPARTMENTS AND DUTIES -
continued

Finance Department

The mission of this department is to manage all financial matters of the SRIA in accordance with all appropriate rules, regulations and laws. This department oversees:

- Budget
- Accounts Receivable and Payable
- Audit
- Data Management
- Customer Service

Human Resources and Events

This department is charged with new hires, promotions, disciplinary actions and terminations, creation and enforcement of personnel policies, as well as overseeing preparation and completion of annual evaluations for each employee. The department also maintains permanent personnel records. The department is responsible for coordinating drug testing for all new hires and random drug testing for existing employees.

Also, this department is responsible for planning and implementing quality events and promotions on Pensacola Beach that enhance the image of the island and increase business while filling hotel rooms, and increasing business at restaurants and retail shops. In addition to promotions and events, the department assists the Executive Director with public relations, hotel relations, advertising, Pensacola Beach Visitor's Information Center, media support, and administrative duties.

Listed below are a few of the special events produced or assisted by the department annually:

- Pensacola Beach Air Show featuring U.S. Navy Blue Angels
- Mardi Gras Celebration
- Pensacola Beach's Santa Rosa Island Triathlon
- Bands on the Beach

Public and Recreational Facilities

The mission of this department is to maintain and repair all of the public facilities and properties on Pensacola Beach. The department oversees:

- Road Maintenance
- Right-of-Way Maintenance
- Public Information Signs
- Drainage
- Parking Lots
- Lighting
- Facility Maintenance
- Beach Access
- Parks

**- SRIA DEPARTMENTS AND DUTIES -
continued**

Public Safety Department

The mission of this department is to promote public safety all of the public facilities and properties on Pensacola Beach. The department is responsible for:

- Public Safety
- Water Safety Program
- Coordination with Law Enforcement
- Coordination with Fire/Rescue
- Coordination with Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers
- Coordination with Baptist Flight
- Coordination with Public Safety Agencies

- HISTORICAL INFORMATION OF SANTA ROSA ISLAND -

- Santa Rosa Island is approximately 50 miles long and one-quarter mile wide at its widest point. On its lee side is Pensacola Bay at the western end and Choctawhatchee Bay at the east - with Santa Rosa Sound connecting the two.
- The white sand beaches on the island are comprised almost entirely of quartz - hence the "sugary white" texture and appearance.
- Excavation of middens on the island revealed that Native Americans inhabited these beaches as long as 2,000 years ago.
- A second Spanish colony was established on the island in the 18th century.
- A cross on Ft. Pickens Rd., located in a dune preserve, marks the site where the first Christian services were held in 1559 shortly after De Luna landed.
- Ft. Pickens on the western end of the island was one of the few forts in the South that remained under Union control during the Civil War.
- The famous Native American Geronimo, who was a leader of the Apache Nation, was held prisoner at Ft. Pickens after his capture in the west.
- The small island located to the north of Pensacola Beach is called Sabine Isle and is owned by the Federal government. Ships coming to the Port of Pensacola dumped their rock ballast at this site creating this island.
- In the late 1920's, a recreation building called "The Casino" was constructed on the site where the new performance pavilion is located. This structure remained until the early 1970's when it was removed. During its history, it was used as a ballroom, restaurant, men's dormitory, gift shop, bathhouse, and other assorted uses.
- Escambia County took title to the land from the United States Department of Interior in 1945. In 1947, the State of Florida legislature created the Santa Rosa Island Authority to administer and oversee the growth of Santa Rosa Island.
- All of Pensacola Beach is owned by Escambia County under the jurisdiction of the Santa Rosa Island Authority. All land on the island is under lease from the Authority to individuals or corporations. No land is held under fee simple title due to deed restrictions imposed on the county by the Federal government when the island was purchased in 1945.
- 1956, February 14, the easternmost 4 miles of this property was leased to Santa Rosa County and is now administered by Santa Rosa County and known as Navarre Beach.
- 1970, the United States, by an Act of the Congress, created the Gulf Islands National Seashore as part of the Department of Interior. The State of Florida deeded approximately 8 miles of Santa Rosa Island known as the Ft. Pickens State Park to the Department of Interior for inclusion in the Gulf Islands National Seashore.
- 1973, January, Escambia County deeded to the United States Department of Interior, through the Gulf Islands National Seashore approximately 7.5 miles of land located on the east end of Pensacola Beach touching the western most boundary of Navarre Beach.
- 1973, the present four-lane Bob Sikes Bridge was constructed connecting Pensacola Beach (Santa Rosa Island) to Gulf Breeze on the Santa Rosa County peninsula. Another bridge connecting the eastern end of the island is located at Navarre Beach.